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ABSTRACT

This study explored the effects of children's cultural group on the content of their dramatic and sociodramatic play. After defining play, dramatic play, sociodramatic play, and culture, observations were conducted by a preschool teacher of Latino-American and first-generation African-American 4-year-olds over an 8-week period. Play that was viewed as relevant and reflective of elements of culture was documented. Children's play was observed in the housekeeping area, block area, and generic rug play area. Findings of the observations were summarized for each particular child's play behavior. The study concluded that for Latino children, language is a very important component of their culturally influenced play. For the children of African immigrant parents, a unique socio-cultural history creates a different perspective and mind set and different behavior. (EV)

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Ruth Thomas

The Cultural Content of Dramatic and Sociodramatic play

Abstract

This paper was written to explore the effects of children's cultural group on the content of their dramatic and sociodramatic play. Children were observed over an eight-week period. Particular attention was paid to the re-enactment in the Housekeeping area; Block area and a Generic Rug play area for culture specific play. Language was the most prominent element in the cultural content of souci-dramatic play.

Introduction

How does a child's cultural group affect the content of his socio-dramatic and dramatic play? Much research has been done which examines the cognitive, social, psychological, and physical rewards of dramatic play and socio-dramatic play. Many studies were conducted which highlight the rewards of culture and ethnicity, socio-dramatic and dramatic play on a child's self esteem and various aspects of his or her personality. However, none of these factors were studied together, in an interrelated manner, but were investigated in isolation. In one study Smilansky examined the effects of Socio-economic status (SES) on play (Smilansky, 1968).

I have been working as a preschool teacher for the past two years and in my experience, I have observed some difference in the children of different cultural group's involvement in dramatic play and socio-dramatic play. The children who were observed are Latinos and African- Americans. Within the framework of their organized sociodramatic and dramatic play, the elements, which composed much of their play, were reflections or reenactments of their immediate social environment, particularly their home environment. These environments are culturally and uniquely different from each other.

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As have been mentioned previously, the researches, which were reviewed, did not combine these three very prominent subject matters within the fields of early childhood and socio-psychological development. However, they were conducted in isolation and were not coupled with each other in any significant magnitude. These subject matters: play, dramatic play, socio-dramatic play and culture will be defined in the following paragraphs

Play

Our society has increasingly become complex, competitive and fast paced. As a result, children's natural play has been replaced with structured activities both at home and at school. But in order for children to make the most of their childhood and develop appropriately, the need for play is important. When children play they are building a foundation for academic skills, promoting social skills and developing good self-esteem. Play is children's work." One of the best ways for children to express themselves is through creative dramatic play," thus play should be encouraged. Children will become more successful when they are allowed to socialize positively and freely during their younger years (Myesky, 1985, p. 38).

A number of researchers, using different procedures and observing children from different cultures, have found that the first pretence gestures appears rather abruptly in normally developing children at about 12 or 13 months of age (Gowen, 1985, p. 6). In Piaget's theory, these early forms of pretence mark the transition from the sensorimotor period of development to the preoperational period. It is during this second stage of development that children begin to develop their symbolic functions, or representational

competence. This is the function that allows children to go beyond the limitations of immediate experience by using symbols to represent past experiences. In this study young children were encouraged to be more dramatic.

> For Piaget, the only general explanation of play had to be tied to the fundamental functional invariant of intelligence. .. It is only when play is viewed as a dimension of human intelligence, adaptive thinking and action that it can be understood in the most general way...
> play is the extreme of one the invariant functions of intelligence, namely, assimilation. .. assimilation is always a transformation of the world to meet the demands of self. ... At the other extreme from play is pure accommodation, or work. Work is always the adaptation of the self to meet the demands of the world. Paiget also pointed out that play changes with age. In infancy play is primarily sensorimotor the child transforms objects into things to be sucked banged or thrown. At the preschool level children acquire the ability to create symbols and begin to engage in symbolic play, which can range in from dramatic to the constructive play with blocks. In childhood proper when children attain concrete operations they begin to engage in games with rules.... (Elkind, 1990, p.15-16).

In the previous paragraph, play was defined, as well as its appropriateness to child development. It is now that the definition of dramatic play, sociodramatic play and culture will be introduced and defined for the purpose of this research.

Dramatic play

The importance of dramatic play in the lives of young children can be effective as a means for developing creativity and imagination, especially for children who have instinctive ways of dealing with reality. It is also plays a major role in the cognitive and emotional development of children through out the preschool years. Through observing his three children, Piaget described the course of development of dramatic play:

beginning with pre-pretence behaviors that mark the transition from the sensorimotor to the representational period (Piaget, 1970, p. 44).

According to Sara Smilansky dramatic play consists of children taking on a role in which they pretend to be some else. They imitate the person's action and speech patterns using real or orgined "props" and drawing on their own first hand or second experience of the imitated individual in various familiar situations (Smilansky 1990).

> Through dramatic play the child can freely display, in a variety of ways his physical prowess, his creative ability and his budding social awareness. He can find a source of satisfaction in the relationship of his play with the adult world. This relationship allows him to acknowledge the objective world situation and at the same time to substitute an imaginary situation that satisfies his personal wishes and needs. Dramatic play has great value in developing the social tendencies of the child because it allows him to be simultaneously, actor, observer and participator, to the fullest extent of his abilities in a common enterprise. (Smilansky, 1968, p.6)

Sociodramatic play

Sociodramatic play is different from dramatic play, in that its content is more elaborate. Dramatic play is transformed into sociodramatic play when the theme becomes elaborate in cooperation of at least one of other role-player. The two participants interact with each other both in action and verbally. The central element of this interactive play is the imitative one, which can be regarded as the reality element. In this setting the child attempts to act, to talk and look like some real person and create situations that are like real-life ones. In his "reproductory play" he recreates the world of adults, but because of his reality his identity and his surroundings, it limits the possibility of exact imitation;

thus another element filters into his play. Allowing for definitions of sociodramatic play: The element is the make believe, imaginative element (Smilansky 1968).

> Imitation includes both actions and speech patterns....
> ...Make believe depends heavily on verbalization. Words take the place of reality in the following ways:
> 1. Declarations to change identity: "I am the daddy".....
> 2. Declarations changing the identity of an object or action. "I am drinking form a bottle."
> 3. Substituting speech for action: " Lets pretend that I have already returned from work"..
> 4. Setting the scene: "lets pretend that this is a hospital...
> (Smilansky, 1990, p.17)

In sociodramatic the verbalization becomes more developed and takes on the patterns and content of adult verbal interaction. In order for play to be considered sociodramatic at least a minimum amount of make believe, imitation and play related interaction must be present. There are six elements, which reflects both dramatic and socio-dramatic play. However in order for play activity to be considered sociodramatic elements five and six must be present.

> 1. Role-play by imitation. The child takes on a role and expresses it through imitative action or verbalization. The child enacts the character of a person or animal other that self in a difference context.
> 2. Make-believe with objects. The child substitutes any or all the following for real objects:
> Toys
> Unstructured materials, pieces of paper, pieces of cloth boxes pieces of wood or sticks
> Gestures and movementsVerbal declarations.
> 3. Make-believe with actions and situations. the child substitutes verbal descriptions and gestures or movements for actions and situations.
> 4. Persistence in the role play. The child persists within the role for an episode lasting for a reasonable length of time- 5, 10, 15 minutes.
> 5. Interaction. There is at least one other child involved and interacting within the framework of the sociodramatic play episode.

> 6. Verbal communication. There is some verbal interaction between members of the sociodramatic group related to what is going on within the episode. There does not seem to be an order of preference for the six elements; they are all necessary in order to develop into sociodramatic play (Smilansansky, 1990, p. 20).

Culture

The previous pages attempted to define and provide examples of play as well as dramatic and sociodramatic play. In the following pages I will attempt to define culture in its sociohistorical construct, then I will clarify what is meant by culture for the purpose of this research. In addition there will be instances where culture might be used interchangeably with ethnicity in order to answer the question being addressed. However I will proceed to define culture in its institutional sense.

> "Culture is the totality of values, beliefs and actions that characterize a people. Culture consists of the behavioral patterns, symbols, institutions, and values of a society, and is unique to that society it is the spiritual, ideational and material composite that distinguishes one society from another. It shapes and is in turn shaped by events in the realm of the spiritual, ideational and the material. All inquiry and solution, truth, beauty, tradition and purity, meaning and reality are culturally relative. There are no culture-free of values-free human endeavors. Cultures are not a static phenomenon. Culture is that composite of socially and historically determined behaviors that nourishes and thereby defines the intellectual and spiritual parameters within which the human individual develops and exists (Akoto, 1992, P.13).

The elements of culture, which will be focused on in this research, are the family, ethnicity and the social dynamics, which surrounds the children's immediate environment. Let us first look at family and their role in transmitting cultural values; which is in turn is

exhibited in aspects of a child dramatic and sociodramatic play. Akoto (1992) puts it this way:

> The unique character of the basic social unit of a culture, is the family, is fashioned within history, as the individual is thereafter fashioned within the family. The clan/ community interacts within their environments, their integrity and development is sustained through several interactive and cohesive modalities. Those modalities include language, spiritual pattern and symbols. These modalities serve to facilitate group and national consciousness and social order. They serve to facilitate social interaction and social bonding" (p.15).

Considering the factors which have surfaced in Smilansky's literature; it is seemingly indicative that dramatic and sociodramtic allows children to take on roles and become imitative of the adults who are consistently apart of their lives. In the social aspects of play a child recreates or dramatizes his known social situations and this reenactment displays aspects of his family- his language and undoubtedly his culture, while simultaneously facilitating his individual needs.

Observations of four year olds

I decided to observe how children combine culture, dramatic play and sociodramatic play. Four children were observed over an eight-week period, and play, which was viewed as relevant and reflected elements of culture, was documented. Consequently, the number of observations, which will be presented for each child, will vary. The children's play was observed, in the housekeeping area, block area, and a generic rug play area. Their interaction with other children, their dramatic and sociodramatic were observed in its cultural relevance.

The children were African American and Latino-American; they were an average of 4.8 years old and attend a pre-school within the Agency for Child Development. The Day Care facility is located in the Mid-Bronx. Some of the children are from two parent households where both parents work. Many of the children are from very low-income households with some parents working, but many others are dependent on public support for supplementary income or for total support. The observations were recorded to determine how culture affects the content of dramatic play and socio-dramatic play. The observations were conducted without any interference or involvement from the teacher. The children were in their normal course of play.

Name: Frank
Cultural Group: Latino
Age: 4.2

Observation 1

Frank is very busy working in the Block area, he has built May edifices, and another child who sits and observes joins him. "Ven y ayardame, este mi casa y esta por me mama." Frank has built two houses. The friend accidentally knocks one over and Frank seems to be very annoyed. "passe me el telephone por la polica vien par tu ahora en pronto". The friend response by saying, "este un accidente". " My mother called the police for my father before: he says, "the police locked him up and now he is in jail. My mother is very upset at my father and now I am upset with you." Franks leaves the Block area and goes to housekeeping to get the telephone.

Observation 2

Frank is in the house keeping area with a group of other children. The other children are reenacting family. Frank wants to cook but another child is at the stove. Frank waits for a brief moment then he says, " let me cook, let me cook the breakfast" the other child ignores Frank. He sits by himself and forms clay into small rounded balls. "This is for my sister, my mother and me none for my father".

Child Summary

Frank spends most of his time interacting with the children, who comprehend his language and the idomatic expressions in Spanish. He very rarely shares with the other children, who speak English.

Franks family has just gotten a divorce. His mother currently receives Public Assistance and work in the B.EG.I.N Program, which is a part of the Welfare Reform. During most of his pretend play Frank brings elements of his home culture, for example, he seems to be truly concerned about the current state of his family affairs. Franks cultural back ground is more evidently seen when he participates in socio-dramatic play episodes which is reflected in the food he cooks, the language which he converses in throughout the play.

Name: Rashie
Cultural Group: African-American
Age: 4.9 years

Observation 1

Rashie is sitting at the table with four other boys. They are using legos to build a longitudinal structure. "This is a big building," says one child, "no!" "It looks like my house", says another. "Downtown there is a building this big with a big big big elevator. Rashie says, "my house is not this huge. It is very low and in Africa the houses are lower like this", he says removing one layer of Lego then he assigns a structure to each child 's description of the height of their home.

Observation 2

Rashie has just entered the play area he empties the contents of a storage bin in a corner and places the storage bin in the middle of the rug. Rashie, very quickly almost, running gets a towel from house keeping. "Come! Come! Let's go to the Mosque." "What's that " asks another boy who is standing nearby "I will wash your feet then go over there on the mat." Replies rashie . "What mat?" "The towel is a mat ok ok, Rashie, says, holding the child. Rashie has "washed" the other child's feet. Rashie gets another towel for the child. "Fix your mat, Fix your mat," calls Rashie to the other child. "Now we are going to pray," he says. " Pray? What is that?" " Pray to Allah you don't know how to pray?" (with a look of astonishment and almost a strong sense of disbelief.) "Ok Follow me," says Rashee "and do what I do ok" Once more touching the child Rashie started kneeling on his knees closing his eyes and mumbling words, which were inaudible. He continued while changing position until he completed a full circle. The friend stayed close by while he imitated most of Rashie actions but still seemed utmostly confused.

Observation 3

Rashie has been working on some lego for five minutes already. He has built some airplanes, which he places next to each other. He is trying to complete another one when he notices he does not have enough Lego left. Four other boys are sitting watching him. "This is the airport, we take to go to Africa", he says, "and sometimes I go with my mother, sometimes she goes with my father." "I goes down South" interjects another child, "my grandmother lives there too."

"Do you want to fly with me?" "Yes," replies the other child. "Get Your luggage," he says, "but from where?" asks one child."Over here" as he gives them blocks.

Observation 4

Rashie is playing in the generic play area with three girls. "Let's make a party,"calls one of the other children. "This is the cake," she says turning a bowl upside down. They have successfully used different manipulative to represent their needed accessories and condiments. After singing Happy Birthday. " Let's dance now," says the birthday girl. Rashie was trying to tie a piece of fabric on her head but was unable to tie it. "This is your head wrap you have to wear it for good luck o.k."He says starring at her.

Child Summary

Rashie is a very bright and perceptual child who, interacts constantly with his peers. His parents are Muslims. Rashie follows directions very precisely and usually tries to operate in a sequence and perform "duties" in a very prescribed manner. Rashie's parents are Africans from the continent, but Rashie was born in the United States i.e., New York. Much of Rashie's dramatic play reflects mundane events, which happen in every day life. However seemingly Rashie experiences around sociodramatic play is reflected in his

religious ties in the Muslim religion. Rashie seems also to have been affected by his dual heritage which he shows the distinctions "this is how the do in Africa." Rashie also seem to have retained memorable events, which occurred, while he travelled to Africa. Rashie has been involved in both socio-dramatic and dramatic play in these episodes of play. His staging and join in other forms of play shows his exposure to different environmental residential areas and notes that he has paid attention to the structural difference and reflects part of his home culture, as well as his ethnic cultural values.

Name: Hami
Cultural Group: African- American
Age: 4.8 years

Observation 1

Hami is sitting at a rectangular table alone. He has about four lacing animals with the laces on the table. He is tying the strings onto the animals instead of lacing them into their perspective holes. One by one he tosses the duck, the turtle, the cat and the elephant to the other side of the table. "Come fishy come, come Fishy, come Fishy ". Hami sat there for about ten minutes, then he started pulling the laces in one by one and placing them in the original storage bins. Hami seems very happy, " I have a lot of fishy to cook today. Fishy and rice."

Observation 2

Hami is sitting at the table in housekeeping. "This is my restaurant do you want to buy something?" asks the owner "yes I want fufu and tea," replies Hami. "What is fufu? We don't have that fufu you want tea.? Asks the owner. "Yes me like fufu wid soup." "Mister I don't have it I don't make it "Hami starts rubbing his hands together and

touching his face. "Well! Well give me eggs and bread" says Hami. "Do you want tea." "Yes", says Hami nodding his head as he utter the words.

Observation 3

A group of four children are pretending to be Power Rangers one of whom is Hami say "I am red...I am the black" and they continued until each has identified themselves by color. There is an extra child and Hami says "look he no have color, he no playing." One child says,"come come, let go lets get it on." The children all started to make imitative sounds which the power rangers make. Hami started backing up and saying "no! No stop fighting." He reversed until he passed the generic play area, blinking his eyes at the same time. He came directly to me and complained, they are fighting. They are killing with guns. I don't like it he says. I don't want to play with them. They are killing just like in Africa."

Observation 4

A group of children are already playing baseball in the generic rug area. Hami wants to play, "I want play" he says o.k. " Be on yellow side," says a child who seems to be the leader. Hami is looking for blocks in the block area he takes three rectangular blocks and erects them on the ground. " What are you doing?" screams another child. "This is the wicket." "Wicket?" "What's that?" "I bat there, you bat there," says Hami as he points to another child. "No! No! That's not how you play only one can bat at a time in baseball, you don't know how to play," concludes the leader. "I know how to play ball and cricket", says Hami. The leader restructures the game as Hami observes.

Observation 5

Hami is using blocks to build an edifice. He makes a triangular shaped roof. His edifice is on the ground floor and is not elevated above the roof. This is my house he says. "You can go in like this," he uses his fingers to walk inside the house.

Observation 6

Children are playing jump rope on the generic play area. The girls are turning "double Dutch" it seems as if Hami wants to join in, as he gets on the line. While waiting on the line Hami removes his shoe. "Why you do that for,"asks the child behind him. "I jump I take my shoe off put here jump there." "Oh no! You jump in your shoe". Its Hami's turn to jump Hami has tried to jump but seems confused with the way the rope is being turned. He holds his head down and walks away to the corner to find his shoe.

Child Summary

Hami is a new child, both new in the United States and a new comer to the educational scene. He is refugee from War and seems severely intimidated by fights or any type of confrontation that would seem physically threatening. Hami spends a lot of time engaging in extended private speech, at which time he recaps his early life experiences, for example. He very seldom plays in an interactive manner with other children, but his dramatic play is particularly significant because it explores the nature "the suburban" experiences which were apart of his growing up in Africa particularly Serrie Leon. Despite his language barriers, Hami responds to many questions in a non-verbal manner. He stares at incidences which are novel to him for ery long period of time. During one episode of Hami's dramatic play, he is fishing, in another he recreates

the scenery, which exists among the houses in Africa. During his one episode of socio dramatic play, he is able to take on the identity but not to play the role since it brings back horrifying memories of his war torn home in his mother country. Hami is a recent immigrant from Africa, whose exposure to American culture is largely dependent on his school environment. Consequently what He characterizes most of his play

Name: Mary
Cultural Group: Latino
Age: 4.5 years

Observation 1

Mary is in the house keeping area. "I am de princess," she says "Que Princessa", replies another child "Princessa de Ponce". Then she turns to the other child and asks. "yo soy linda. Si? Or no?" Mary is watching TV in the house keeping area. "I am watching Esmerelada." The television has be created be using to red storage bins which are mounted on top of each other. As Mary watches her soap opera, she is suddenly interrupted by the telephone. She picks up the telephone "I watching de television ala Esmerelada is bonita si si y yo tambien. A tarde viene por un fiesta tu viene." Vengo", she replies. "Yo consinando pernil y arroz con gradules por la fiesta

Observation 2

Mary has a doll wrapped in a blanket and she has a bag on her arm. "Abansa! Abansa! La guagaua viene ahora." She is still wearing high heeled shoes. "Voy por la doctor porque mi bebe enferma. Check por el medicaid y lo otro papelito for el bebe". Mary leaves the house keeping and she is walking very fast. She stops next to a shelf with two other

children standing next to her. "I am waiting the bus". Suddenly the bus arrives. They all got on the bus.

Child Summary

She is a recent immigrant from Puerto Rico and she lives with her grandmother, who receives financial support from her father and mother who are both in the military service station in Virginia Beach. Mary has learnt a lot about life in New York City from the experiences with her grandmother and her interactions at school. She possesses a lot of charisma and she spends a lot of time on her appearance. For her A look seems to be very important.

As a child with Puerto Rican heritage she seems to possess a different sense of socialization from the children who are from Latino culture but different places of origin. Both her socio-dramatic and dramatic play reflects contents of both her experiences in Puerto Rico, her New York City via her grandmother. In the school setting she is very Abuse participating, observing, learning and teaching.

I noticed that she likes to be with people but there were moments when she will sit quietly as the table. In fact she has not been playing at the table, but she has changed her pattern and content of play and interacts more in a cooperative way. The fourth week she seemed more confidant since she initiates her own activities but she still does not like to share.

Name: Steffie
Cultural Group: Latino
Age: 4.7years

Observation 1

Steffie has congregated in the house keeping area with about five other children. "You are titi Ana, You are titi Carmen, "You are tito Luis" "You are cousin o.k, o.k, o.k." All the participants have accepted their role and Steffie has assigned herself the role of "abuelita". Steffie sits on a rocking chair holding a baby, which is wrapped in a blanket, while humming a tune.

Observation 2

Steffie went to the sink in the house area and pretended that she was drinking water. Then she said to another child "you be the daddy and I will be the mommy." The she said: I am making lunch. Who wants to go store I need a little pancito." The "father leaves and goes to the store. I third child enters and sys "Tengo hambre quiero mangu

Observation 3

Steffie is playing with logos; she has just built it a bed for the "abuelita". "Come on Julie you want to play with me." Steffie asks, "what is that the bed for you." Julie dresses herself in a bonnet and puts on a night gown that make her look like a real grandmother. "Tu enferma velda?" questions. Steffie complains of working too hard but the grandmother complains of a bachache and watching too many grandchildren while the mothers roam the streets.

Observation 4

Steffie is staging a puppet show with her group of four other children. Steffie orates from behind a shelf. She uses three bears, which are in housekeeping to represent the three Bears in Goldilock. Steffie constantly changes her voice to suit the character whom she in imitating. She retells the story both in Spanish and English. Steffie has utensils, which

she utilize as the porridge boils. Steffie was not sure what porridge was. After the show she asked the teacher what is porridge?

Child Summary

Steffie's family is from Santo Domingo. Her idiomatic expressions are seemingly different from Mary per se. Steffie uses words and other forms of expressions, which carries the same connotation of other Spanish-speaking children.

Her family situation is reflected in both her sociodramatic and dramatic play but in more evident in her sociodramatic play. Since she seems to benefit from being among groups of people.

The house area seems to be the most popular spot for Steffie. This is where she is able to relax more, and also develop the ability to imitate the behavior of women, whom she have encountered and have being interactively or passively involved with. In instances perhaps the characteristic of the attitudes of her mother or female figure. She incorporates a great deal of conversation and she is very creative.

Hispanic Cultural Group Summary

This section will bring Latino, which will be use interchangeably with Hispanic Cultural group in to focus. This section will examine the socio-historical entities, which contributes to Latino culture. This will provide a broader frame of work of the cultural underpinnings of the children in these observations.

> Hispanics constitute a very important minority group with a large and constant presence in the United States. Their cultural and language characteristics represent different varieties and levels due to Hispanics historical, socioeconomic and immigration experiences in the United States. Within Hispanic subgroups, cultural and linguistic

> variations are factors that make them a diverse and unique population. (Corrasquillo, 1991, p.3)

In general the culture possesses certain talents which cannot be ignored on a group consciousness. However there are culture specific elements which are manifested on different groups of Latinos and this difference is directly related to and affected by their place of origin i.e. country. Looking an the specific cultural groups of the three Latinos who were observed we can further comprehend the cultural element which is exhibited in their dramatic and or socio-dramatic play (Casquillio, 1991, p.52) makes this assertion.

There are indeed real differences between groups of people, and those differences need to be recognized, understood, and respected. For those dealing directly with Hispanic children and youth, it becomes a process of balancing an awareness of general cultural or subcultural traits with an affirmation of the absolute uniqueness of every individual.

> . Hispanics form a cultural, socio and historical mosaic Hispanic immigrants bring variants of national cultures. Mexican Americans represents a Hispanic culture distinct from Puerto Ricans, Cubans or Dominicans. Their eating habits are different. They have different religious beliefs, different Spanish language characteristics and show different migration patterns. For example, taking the simplistic trait of foods, a rich variation of dishes is found. Puerto Ricans main food is rice and beans, yellow rice with pigeons, pernil, and pasteles. One of Dominicans main plates is mangu (mashed plantains) and moro (yellow rice with beans). Cubans black and congri (yellow rice with beans) are unique dishes. Ecuadoreans are famous for their cebiche. But, the Eduadorean cegiche is different from the Peruvian cebiche.(Casquello, 1991, p.52)

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If we are to look at group Latino and African American we will note that there are marked distinctions, which exist among each group. Puerto Ricans are United States citizens, but with different historical, linguistic and cultural traits than other Americans. As is reflected in the observations the socio-dramatic play of the children possesses elements of their culture. In the case of the Latinos the language component seems to have been the pertinent factor, in executing the cultural basis of the Reno-enactment, which were staged. When the children played in a homogenizes language situation the play runs more smoothly. In addition to the verbal communicative language, there is a lot of body language involved especially among the Latino children. The essential cultural in the Latino children was language, which was coupled with other factors. Information will be presented which places the pertinence of language in Latinos culture, more so than the other group, which is a part of this research.

> Language is the key component of culture. It is the primary medium for transmitting much of culture, making the process of language learning in children a linguistic dimension of culture. Children learning their native language are learning their own culture. Learning a second language also involves a second culture to varying degrees that may have profound cognitive and psychological consequences for children and youth. (Carrasquillo, 1991, P.51). Language is a key element in dramatic and sociodramatic. It is the transcendental element, which facilitates the child imaginative experience.
> 1. Language is a purely human activity. Every physiologically and mentally normal person acquires in childhood the ability to make use of a system of verbal and nonverbal communications, as both speaker and hearer. Speaker possess abstract abilities that enable them to produce grammatically correct sentences in a language, and they actively engaged in a gradual subconscious and creative process of discovery through which they acquire the rule system of their language.
> 2. Language is used to interact or communicate with other members of the same speech community. In other words,

Puerto Rican Spanish speakers interact or communicate without difficulty with Spanish speakers from the Dominican Republic,

3. Language is a means of individual expression. Individuals use language to impart information, express feelings and emotions and to influence the activities of others. The language produced by children has a particular purpose; i.e., to convey a need, to get an object, to express Chomsky (1965) suspect that language is universally acquired in the same manner. Children learn the language by relating their understanding of the new to what they already know and by changing or elaborating the knowledge they acquire.

Peru or El Salvador.

5. Language normally does not operate without meaning or function. Language learners are learning all the time, using social or cognitive strategies. The acquisition of meanings and concepts is a process that continues well beyond the primary years.

6. Language production is usually less than language comprehension. Language learners show more receptive language than the language they are able to produce. Perceptually, children need to have some comprehension of the language system they are trying to internalize. Physiologically, children must feel conformable about using the language productively. Once they feel ready to orally express their thought, they will communicate in the desired language.

It is the language factor that is the cultural dynamic of Latino culture. This is a major element in the socialization of the Latino children. The important culture dimensions of the Hispanic culture are related to language familiarity and use, interaction with fellow Hispanics, ethnic loyalty and identity, cultural awareness and general proximity (Fitzpatrick, 1982, Spolsky, 1978) (Carrasquillo, 1991, p.50).

Hispanic Children of parents whose native language is not English, particularly immigrant children, have a broad range of language characteristics and needs that impact on their development. Language is recognized as the means for representing thought and as the vehicle for complex thinking. But children use the language they understand best

to explore, interpret, and construct meaning and to manipulate complex concepts (Brown, 1980; Chomsky, 1965/ Diaz, 1983; Sapir, 1921).

Language is a very important component of Hispanic children's and youth's cognitive development and growth since it is a reflection of their underlying thought; it expresses and defines their ideas, concepts and login. Proficiency in two languages and desirable because it enables students to think in two systems, shifting language codes as necessary to solve problems. Capable bilinguals have a problem solving advantage over monolinguals (Cummins, 1984; Diaz, 1983; Peal & Lambert, 1962).

> Language serves to facilitate or amplify intellectual growth because the individual intellect interacts with things and people in the environment. An extensive vocabulary, broad concepts, and command of grammatical construction facilitates learning, memory and manipulation of complex concepts (Brown, 1980).

African American Cultural Group Summary

African American children possess cultural traits, which are totally different from that of both their Latino and White counterpart. Their socio cultural history is uniquely different and caters to a different perspective and mind set or even exhibits different types of behavior. Janice - Hale Benson postulates her findings and assumptions in the following way:

Piaget (1966) distinguishes four factors that influence the development of cognitive functions:
1. Equilibration factors, which arise through interaction with the environment and development of mental operations.

2. Social factor, which differ from one society to another, and include particularly factors of educational and cultural transmission.

These factors do not operate independently, but the second and fourth do vary from one society to another, and be used as a basis for investigating differences in performance in cultural subgroups. Even though Piaget=s work has potential cross-cultural research, certain methodological defects will have to be corrected. Raphael Nyiti (1976, pg. 1122) pointed out three such problems in the application of Piaget=c clinical method to research of mastery of conservation among children of Tanzania:

1. Linguistic and cultural barriers between the subject and the investigator
2. The tendency to treat Piaget's conservation tasks as performance tests
3. The determination of subjects ages from estimates or unreliable sources

At a conference held in Sierra Leone, West Africa, by UNICEF in 1974 to study the development of mathematical and scientific skills by African children, a group of African scholars outlined areas of Piaget's work that need further investigation to describe concept development among Africans:

> The opportunities given for play and manipulative activities among children and the relationship of such activities to concept development
> Appropriate interview procedures used to ascertain the characteristics of African children's thinking
> The extent to which the mother tongue affects the learning of concepts in a new language
> The effect of bilingualism and multiligualism on the development of concepts (This was particularly interesting to me because most of the children I encountered in Africa spoke from three to seven languages).
> In the context of environmental circumstances, to what extent various wasting diseases and deficiency diseases affect intellectual growth
> Against the different social and cultural backgrounds, the extent to which African cosmology influences the development of concepts (African scholars have hypothesized that the rituals and magico-religious beliefs

may affect the development of concepts in African children.)

The games, riddles, and proverbs found among African groups and their effect on concept development

The concept if Aintelligence@ or Acleverness= as it is understood among African groups

Parental attitudes toward schooling and the influence these exert upon concept development (Available evidence suggests that parental attitudes seem to be more important than family income in determining the performance of children.)

The development of relevant social concepts, such as kinship, chieftaincy, presidency, and the like

The precocity of African babies and the extent to which it is maintained over a period of time

Smilansky makes the distinction that children from advantaged of affluent sociocultural backgrounds organize and execute sociodramatic play remarkably different, from children of disadvantaged or mediocre sociocultural strata. This study is based on written material recorded by five field workers observing 36 kindergarten and nursery schools. (Smilansky. 1968).

Conclusion

This observation and documentation served its purpose in assisting me in conducting research using a different lens of perspective. The children were observed in their normal course of play. Their re-enactment speculatively represent significant experiences from their past encounters. They must have felt some importance to these "events". This study has caused me to reflects on one theorist assertion: "A child is a survival machine and or a social animal" They are always "active participants in their environment" even when they are seemingly passive observers.

Since play is children's work, inferentially we can discern much difference about children's experiences or imaginative ability. His ability to facilitate and engage in play

be it simple complex or elaborate forms .We an also learn about children's preferences their likes and dislikes and more significantly their previous exposure and factors which combine to make up their sub-culture, their cultural values and sentiments.

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